

FOSTERING NATURE CONNECTION AT SCHOOL

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THEORIES

- Attention restoration theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989)
- Stress recovery theory (Ulrich et al., 1991)
- Biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984)
- Ecological dynamics framework (Sharma-Brymer et al., 2018)
- Froebel
- Dewey



ACCESS

having nature nearby to home or school

ENGAGEMENT

spending time in or amongst natural spaces

CONNECTION

psychological feeling of oneness with nature

BENEFITS

- Lower stress levels
- Fewer hyperactivity and conduct problems
- Fewer mental health difficulties
- Greater emotional wellbeing
- Increased focus at school
- Increased empathy for nature



FS VS NBL

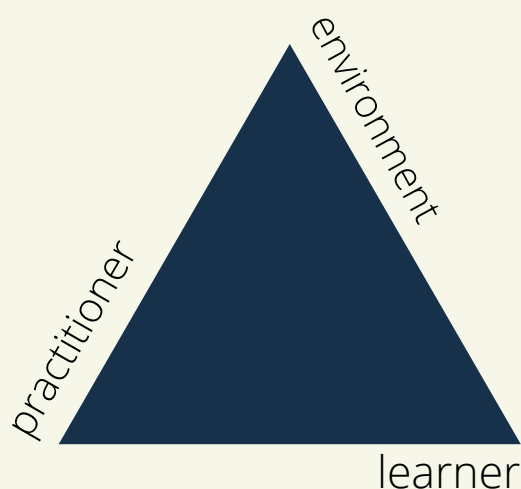
Forest School is a philosophy. Nature-based learning is a broad term that encompasses all types of learning outside.

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

- Improved focus
- Opportunity to opt into or out of sensory stimuli
- ‘Take what you need’ experience

TOP TIPS

- Remove hierarchy of power when outside (first names for all, remove some typical school rules)
- Build trust, understand individual needs – Knight’s triangle of trust
- Determine rules and boundaries prior to going outside
- Create rituals and routines (e.g., fire circle, sit spots)
- Avoid romanticising nature – it doesn’t make everyone happy!
- Consider what clothing and resources are needed
- Avoid ‘no,’ encourage child-led inquiry and exploration instead



TAKEAWAYS

- There are numerous theories and a solid evidence base to support nature-based learning in multiple forms
- Being in nature can be scary, but there are many ways to assess and manage risk
- Taking children outside provides an opportunity for them to demonstrate and develop different strengths
- There is no right or wrong way to engage children with nature

